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and groups; people used to come up dressed in their best clothes and stand very firmly at attention as if they were expecting to be shot any minute. A never failing source of amusement was looking through the view-finder of the camera, or, better still, field glasses; people would return again and again with their friends with demands to look through these wonderful appliances.

I had brought with me several packets of Japanese water flowers to amuse the children, and also in the hope of getting a lead as to whether they would interpret the sudden changes in these flowers in an animist fashion or not. The children quite liked looking at them but were not nearly as interested as their elders, who pointed out the changes taking place in the flowers in hushed and enthralled voices to the children and to each other. The children stared at them and said they were very pretty; when I asked 'who made them grow' they said 'the water makes the flowers grow', or else just 'the flowers bloom'. One child even corrected me when I said 'who makes the flowers grow', telling me I should say 'what makes the flowers grow'; and when I put leading questions asking whether gods or devils made the flowers grow they always replied in an emphatic negative. The children know about devils and are frightened of them and some of them have heard them; but the devils' and gods' spheres of action are rigorously defined and nothing which falls outside those spheres should be ascribed to them. What the children liked best about the flowers were the brightly coloured envelopes and the white paper they were contained in. They would treasure these most carefully and in the case of the paper would fold it up extremely neatly and tidily into small squares.

Lepcha children and Lepcha adults are extraordinarily unselfish; after a little experience I never bothered to divide collective gifts among them; I would give a packet of cigarettes or a handful of barley sugar to the person nearest to me, certain that it would be divided completely fairly among all present. Even with the Japanese flowers I would open a packet, show one child how to put the flowers in water and would then leave the open packet by the glass; one of the children would be sure to divide up the dry flowers equally among all present and if another child arrived later those who still had some flowers or paper would at once give a share to the new arrival. Except in the case of youngest or only children I never heard or saw children quarrel about the ownership of anything or the sharing of it. With little tots of three or four

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the gift-giving habit was already established; very often after I had given them some Japanese flowers a small child would come tottering up to me with either a live flower or a few bright coloured seeds tightly clutched in its hand. Almost the only positive lesson in good manners the children are taught is that when elders give them a present they must receive it with joined hands; and one day Pembu's four-year-old son scolded me severely because I took his gift of a cactus blossom in one hand only.

ii

My type-picture of the Lepchas is of a crowd gathered for some feast or ceremony. In point of fact this only represents a very small portion of their lives; but on work-days they are so widely scattered as to be invisible and almost unfindable in the open country; often for days at a time they are absent from home, working in distant fields, and sleeping in the field-house; when they do return home in the evening they are usually tired and go to sleep fairly shortly after the evening meal.

The Lepcha working-day starts at cock-crow when everybody gets up; a substantial cold meal, usually consisting of grain, with perhaps some milk and any meat or flavourings which may be available is eaten; it is usually accompanied by tea. Then everybody goes to their work in the fields or forests, taking with them some popped corn or cold cooked rice in their haversack to nibble if they feel hungry during the day's work. In the evening towards sundown they come home for the second meal of the day. The youngest daughter-in-law is meant to do the cooking, under the direction of the house-mother, or, if she be too old, of the eldest daughter-in-law, who gives out the supplies; but in practice all the women present lend a hand. If there are no women free, men will do the cooking; but it is considered slightly degrading for a house-father to have to prepare his own meal. Each evening enough is cooked to serve for that evening and also for the following morning.

While the food is being prepared the men may weave mats or baskets, or do other odd jobs about the house, or they may sit and drink *chi*. Everybody eats the main meal together; the house-mother hands out the food, serving the oldest members first; if there are young children the fathers will feed the daughters and the mothers the sons. After the evening meal there may be a visit either

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dence will be formally recognised by its parents in a number of ways. In their earlier years children are fed from their parents' plates, the son usually eating from the mother's and the daughter from the father's. At about the age of four the child is given a plate and cup of its own, or, if it is not given a plate, will be given its food on a separate leaf to eat by itself. At the same time a child is also given its clothes and a piece of cloth; the mother gives it a small haversack which she has woven out of nettle cloth and the father gives a boy a small knife, a girl a small sickle. These articles are the absolute property of the child and he can, if he wishes, give them away. The young child is not censured if it breaks or loses the property, for it is very young, but if it persistently spoils or loses it the property is not replaced until it is older and wiser. The actual age on which the knife and sickle are given varies very considerably with the character of the child and the disposition of the parents; some children in their fourth year had already got these implements while others in their sixth year had not. Parents manifest no sort of anxiety lest their children should hurt themselves with these instruments; and I frequently saw adults lend children of five or six their own knives, which are nearly as long as a child's leg and are quite capable of killing a man. This confidence seems to be justified, for I never saw a child badly cut by a knife, though a couple of adults came to have their feet dressed after they had wounded themselves with a hatchet. The haversack plays an important part in the child's development; every morning the mother gives it some grain which it can nibble whenever it feels hungry; actual hunger seems to play very little part in the life of the Lepcha child. By the time it has got its haversack the Lepcha child has fully developed the habit of sharing and will always give some of its grain to anybody who asks for it, and indeed if it is eating will offer it without being asked. If I was talking to or playing with children of five or six they nearly always gave me a handful of popped corn or cold rice.

With this achievement of the signs of physical independence a child's conscious education begins. As far as manners are concerned the only consciously inculcated habit is that of receiving gifts with joined hands. Children have to learn to respect the bedding and sleeping places of their grandparents, but otherwise respect for older people is not verbally inculcated; children do not usually alter their behaviour in any way on account of the presence of elder people or people of importance; when they grow older

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867 young people copy their elders in showing reverence where reverence is considered to be due.

861 867 The child's moral education or moulding is performed in two ways—by precept and by punishment. Moral axioms stressing the desirability of social approval are frequently repeated to children: 'As long as you help others, others will help you'; 'Nobody will help a thief', and so on.

If a child is naughty or tiresome—if it gets in the way, or makes a nuisance of itself, or if it excretes inside the house when it can walk out by itself—the annoyed adult will probably hit it in some way; it may be rapped over the head with the knuckles or have its ear tweaked, flicked with the fingers or cut with a switch; a man may catch it on the calves with the thin strap of his knife scabbard, a woman hit it with a stick such as is used for stirring food. These punishments for being a nuisance are given in a very impersonal way, almost as an automatic reaction to a disagreeable stimulus; a single movement is made, usually without the adult interrupting more than temporarily the work he or she is engaged on and without any verbal remonstrances or scoldings beyond that which may accompany the blow. The emphasis is on the annoyance or work caused to the adult, not on the naughtiness of the child. The punishments are always given immediately after the offence and in anger; they are given capriciously without any emphasis that they are for the child's good; children mustn't be a nuisance and mustn't cause unnecessary work. Occasionally when they are really cross people will hit a child harder than is necessary; Chimpet still carries the scar on his forehead from a blow he received from his mother when he was three or four years old; he kept on getting in her way while she was busy cooking, until she picked up a piece of firewood and hit him with it, unfortunately catching his forehead with a pointed edge. It is considered that usually one parent will punish a child more than the other, and it is generally the mother who does the most punishment. Often if one parent is cross with a child, the other will defend it: 'If both parents are angry together with a child at the same time they might kill it; if both spoil it the child will grow up naughty.'

But besides being an occasional nuisance, a child is also capable of committing crimes, and in such cases the punishment is severe and even drastic.[6] If a child steals (even fruit from the garden of a neighbour) or spoils anybody's property, or insults people or

[6] Many examples of these punishments are given in Chapter Fifteen.

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draws its knife in anger, if it tells lies or quarrels, it will be given a really severe thrashing, or otherwise hurt or frightened. The punishments are often proportionately more severe than they would be for a similar crime performed by an adult in order to act as a deterrent; badness is an inbred characteristic—the child is born 'with a bad heart'—and unless this badness is eradicated by education, especially from the parents, the child will become a socially undesirable adult. It is exceptional for children to be so drastically punished, and the great majority grow up without having any experience of such treatment.

At the same time as its moral education a child's technical education starts. Children are taught work techniques by being instructed to copy their elders, by verbal admonition, or by having their arms held while they are put through the appropriate gestures. Boys are especially taught agricultural work and mat weaving, girls spinning, the pounding and winnowing of grain and cooking. On occasion boys prefer to spin and do their mothers' work, and girls to copy their fathers; little attention is paid to this; as the children grow older they learn to do their proper work. There are no 'occupational inverts' in Lingthem.

From about the age of six children should be able to assist and accompany their elders in all forms of work. Boys are thought to be a little slower in learning than girls. A six-year-old girl should be an active help to her mother; boys at that age are still learning and aren't a real help to their fathers till a year or so later. When a child has acquired complete physical independence any signs of precociousness or adaptability which will make it more quickly a useful member of the household are looked for and encouraged. There are a number of household chores—particularly the fetching of water and firewood—which are considered specifically children's work; adults who have to do such jobs for themselves feel that they are slightly ill-used; it will be remembered that one of the reasons for childless people adopting a boy was to get somebody to do such work.[7] Children also do light work in the fields; a child can collect twigs and drop seeds as well as an adult.

As soon as children can talk properly adults stop using baby language to them; indeed young children are talked to very little, for it is not considered that they will be able to talk reasonably until they have lost their milk-teeth. At about the age of five children —especially the children of lamas—are taught and encouraged to

[7] See Chapter Six, p. 178.

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846 ritual copulation takes place on the third day after birth,
833 in which case it is known as *Suknong Munlok*, but the procedure is the same. It is only done when the pain is so severe that the woman cannot bear to wait until the seventh day.

863 A child is considered to be naughty if it is dirty in the house after the age of two. When it is about one month old its parents start to teach it to empty its bowels at regular interval, and it is taken out to the veranda for this purpose.

856 By the time the baby is three it is able to crawl, after which it can go to the veranda by itself, or can at least make its wants known to others. A few children can never be taught to be clean, and it is thought that such ones are invariably naughty in later life. No notice is taken of a child which is dirty inside the house up to the age of three, but after this age it is slapped on the bottom or thighs by one of its parents with a brush made from bamboo slivers: it is not punished in any other way.

868 At about the age of five girls begin to learn women's work
867 and start to carry water and help husk the grain: boys also are supposed to start learning men's work at the same time; but nobody seems to worry if they spend the whole day playing about amongst themselves. At this time all children are taught that when anyone gives them anything they should accept it in both hands. There is very little idea of personal possession and I frequently noticed that whenever a child was given anything it immediately shared it with its friends. It is the most pleasing characteristic of Lepcha children.

868 Boys are usually given a *ban* at about the age of four, and
412 it is a common sight to see a child of this age already using his knife with considerable skill. Although the knife is almost as big as the child itself accidents never seem to occur, possibly because neither the child nor its parents has any conception of the possibility of danger. Girls are given a sickle when they are eight. This is the female counterpart of the *ban*, and is used to cut grass, and as a general-utility tool. It is worn tucked into the waistband in the small of the back: